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ABSTRACT

This book, written in English and Zulu, presents stories written by older people from the Muthande Society for the Aged Literacy Programme in South Africa. It is suitable for people learning to read for the first time or for people learning to read in a second language. In the Muthande Society for the Aged Literacy Programme, both teachers and learners are older people. As part of the program in 1999, oral storytelling workshops were conducted with these older learners. Through the use of artifacts such as old coins, musical instruments, and pass books, many of which participants had not seen in decades, vivid memories and experiences were evoked. The stories in this book were selected for their power to bring back very personal memories of passionate love, loss, disappearing traditions, and life in apartheid South Africa. The stories are: "The Power of the Drum"; "Makhweyana"; "Father's Dish"; "Working on a Farm"; "Love That Never Ends"; "She Was Overcome with Love"; "My Grief"; "My Hat"; "Courage To Conquer"; "I Looked for It and Found It"; and "Making History." (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education) (SM)

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The Power of the Drum and other Stories

Muthande Society for the Aged Literacy Learners

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The power of the drum

and other stories

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Isigubhu sezimanga

nezinye izindaba

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The power of the drum

and other stories

by Muthande Society for the Aged
literacy learners

illustrated by Adele O' Connell

Isigubhu sezimanga

nezinye izindaba

zibhalwe abafundi abadala Muthande Society
for the Aged

imidwebo ngu-Adele O' Connell

Contents

Okuphakathi

The power of the drum	7	Isigubhu sezimanga
Makhweyana	11	UMakhweyana
Father's dish	16	Indishi kababa
Working on a farm	19	Ukusebenza epulazini
Love that never ends	24	Uthando olungapheliyo
She was overcome with love	28	Wagajwa uthando
My grief	44	Usizi lwami
My hat	47	Isigqoko sami
Courage to conquer	51	Isibindi umanqoba
I looked for it and I found it	60	Ngawufuna ngawuthola
Making history	64	Inqophamlando

Introduction

The stories in this book were written by a unique group of learners – older people from the Muthande Society for the Aged Literacy Programme in Durban, South Africa. In this programme, one of the first of its kind in the world, both the teachers and learners are older people. They have proved that no matter how old you are, it is possible to learn and change.

As part of the programme in 1999, oral storytelling workshops were run with learners. Through the dramatic use of artefacts like old coins, musical instruments, and pass books, many of which participants had not seen for decades, vivid memories and experiences were evoked. Stories from all participants and facilitators were published in a Zulu book called, "Siyakhumbula" which means, "We remember". The stories published here for a wider audience have been selected for their power to bring back very personal memories of passionate love, loss, disappearing traditions and life in apartheid South Africa.

This book was made possible by funding from HelpAge International and The Department for International Development (UK). Thanks to the many people who made this book possible: Ida Gartrell, Constance Guma, Zanele Mabaso, Daniela McCullough, ZamaZulu Nodangala, Lettie Nodangala and above all the learners and staff of the Muthande Society for the Aged Literacy Programme.

Elda Lyster & Bongiwe Dlamini (editors)

Isingeniso

Lezizindaba ezikulencwadi zibhalwe yiqembu labafundi abangejwayelekile – abangabantu asebekhulile benhlangano yezemfundo yabadala iMuthande Society for the Aged Literacy Programme eThekwini, eNingizimu Afrika. Kulenhlangano, engoyokuqala yaloluhlobo emhlabeni wonke jikelele, othisha kanye nabafundi bangabantu abadala asebekhulile. Bakuqinisekile ukuthi noma ungabamdala kangakanani, uyakwazi ukufunda nokushintsha.

Njengenye yezinhlelo zokufunda zango 1999, bekunohlelo lapho kuxoxwa izindaba nabafundi. Bekwenziwa imidlalo ngezinto ezifana nemali endala, izinsimbi zomculo, amapasi akudala, okuyizinto abafundi ababekade begcine ukuzibona eminyakeni emininingi edlulile. Lokhu kwabuyisa imicabango yezehlakalo eziningi esezadlula. Izindaba ezaziqhamuka kubafundi kanye no thisha zashicilelwa encwadini yesiZulu ebizwa ngokuthi, "Siyabakhumbula". Lezizindaba ezishicilelwe kulencwadi eziqondiswe kubafundi bohlobo olwehlukene, zikhethwe ngendlela ezibuyise ngayo imicabango yezehlakalo zothando, ukulahlekelwa, ukuncipha kwamasiko kanye nokuphila ngesikhathi sobandlululo eNingizimu Africa.

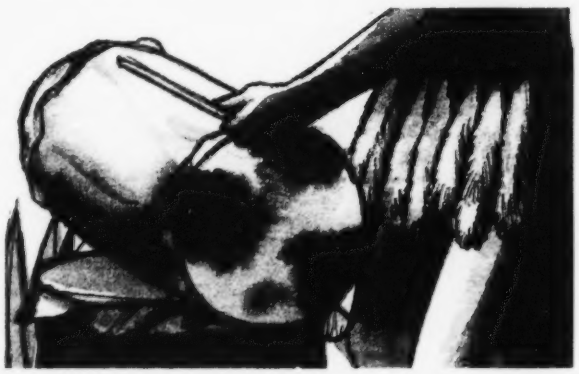
Ukuphumelela kwalencwadi kwenziwe umxhaso wemali eqhamuke kwa-HelpAge International kanye ne-Department for International Development (UK). Sibonga kubantu abaningi abenze lencwadi yaba yimpumelelo: Ida Gartrell, Constance Guma, Zanele Mabaso, Daniela McCullough, ZamaZulu Nodangala, Lettie Nodangala, ikakhulukazi nabafundi kanye nabasebenzi beMuthande Society for the Aged Literacy Programme.

Elda Lyster & Bongiwe Dlamini (abaheli)

The power of the drum

Christina Thusi : Clermont Central Literacy Class

One day I attended a ceremony of the Bheleni clan. The story begins when some young men from Mshukangubo arrived. There was a young man who stole my heart there. He put on such a performance, showing off his loincloth once he started beating the drum.



Isigubhu sezimanga

Ngelinye ilanga ngaya ececeni emaBheleni. Indaba iqala ngenkathi kufika izinsizwa zaseMshukangubo. Kwakukhona insizwa eyathatha inhliziyo yami lapho. Yadlalisela isimanga idlisela ngebheshu layo elinkone ngenkathi iqala ukushaya isigubhu.

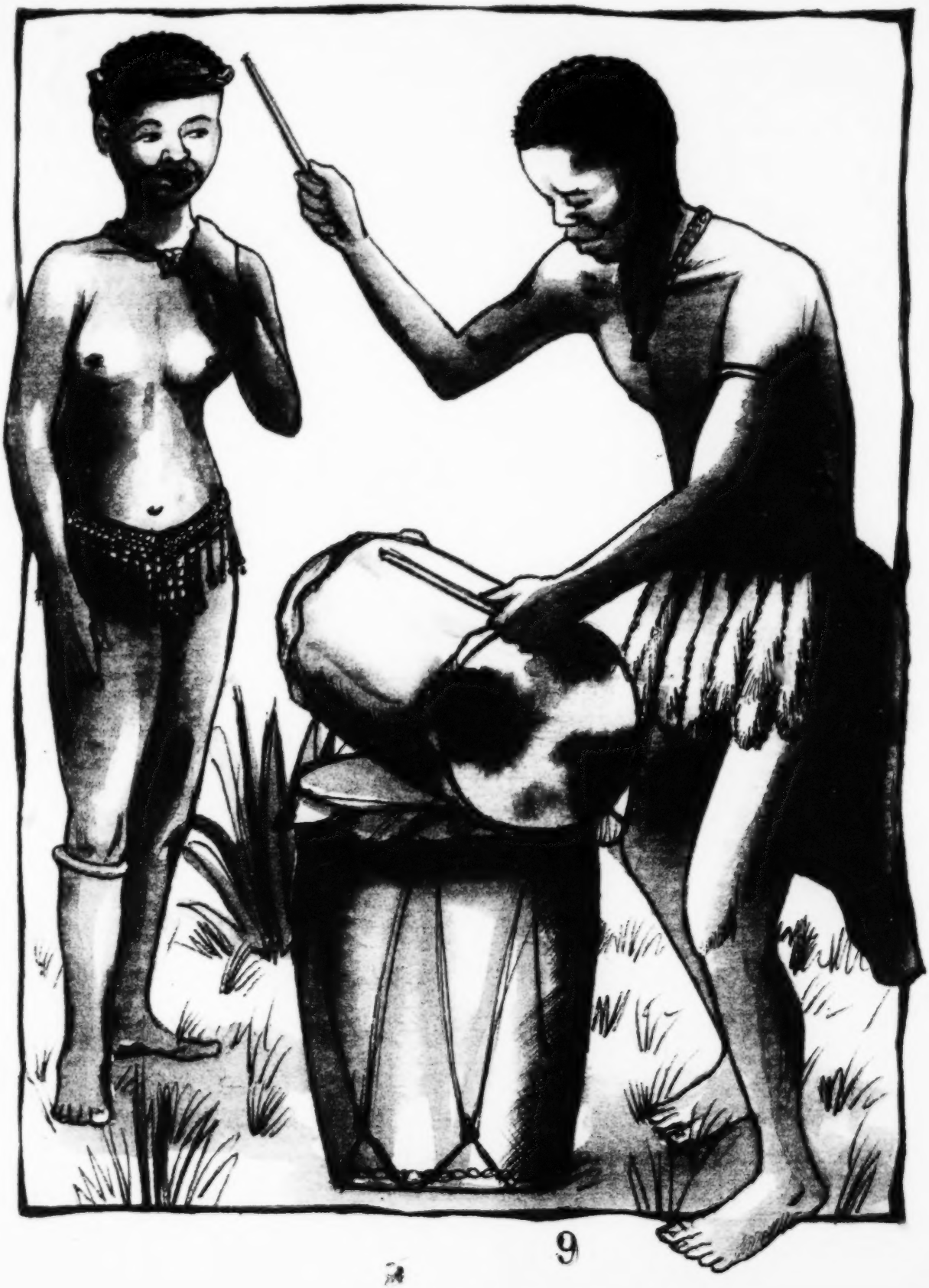
7

He introduced himself to me but I was already crazy. My stomach started turning. I had no control. The tall one, Thusi, had such an effect on me. I did not even wait for our maiden leader. I ripped off the bead belt from my waist and said, "Here, take this, you have defeated me Thusi." He jumped up praising himself.

Before the year was over, Thusi paid all the lobola cattle. We then prepared for the wedding ceremony and I got married.

Yazibika kimina kanti vele sengisangene. Isisu sami saqala ukuxhuxhuzela. Ngangakwazi ukuzibamba. Ugqamu kwabade umfo kaThusi wasengisanganisile. Angibange ngisalinda qhikiza. Gqabuliyane umutsha okhalo, ngathi, "Mina, ungehlule mfokaThusi." Wagxuma ezibongela.

Ngaphambi kokuthi unyaka uphele wazishaya zonke umfo kaThusi. Sabe sesilungiselela udwendwe ngagcagca.



9

We were happy in our marriage. We were blessed with seven children, three boys and four girls. We named the boys Mzamiseni, Mtotolo and Nsukukazifani. The girls were Zibuyile, Zozo, Zinhle and Mankehli. Our sons and daughters got married and started their families. They had their own children and we became grandmother and grandfather. From then on we stayed together with our daughters-in-law and grandchildren.

I was prosperous in my Mfeneni family. Our household was huge like a Zulu royal kraal. We had many cattle and all was well.

Sasithokozile emshadweni wethu. Sabusiswa ngabantwana abayisikhombisa, abafana abathathu namantombazane amane. Abafana sabaqamba kwaba uMzamiseni, uMtotolo noNsukukazifani. Amantombazane kwaba uZibuyile, uZozo, uZinhle noMankehli. Amadodana ethu aganwa namadodakazi agana baqala imindeni yabo. Sebenabantababo sesingogogo nomkhulu. Kusukela lapho sahlala ndawonye nomalokazana bethu nabazukulu.

Ngangibusa emndenini wami emaMfeneni. Umuzi wethu wawumkhulu unjengenxuluma. Sasifuye izinkomo eziningi kukuhle konke.

10

Makhweyana

Severinah Cibane : Clermont Central Literacy Class

I was a young lady born of the Msomi, Nomndayi family. I was short and of medium size. I already had several suitors, and was pursued by a lot of young men. Of all my suitors one stood out and made me feel crazy. This young man was Makhweyana uMlilo kaZokhele.

UMakhweyana

Ngikhule ngiyintombi yakwaMsomi kwaNomndayi. Ngangimfishane ngilingene nje ngesidumbu. Ngase nginezesheli, ngeshelwa yizinsizwa eziningi. Ezinsizweni ezazingeshela iyodwa eyayivelele, ingisanganisa. Lensizwa kwakunguMakhweyana uMlilo kaZokhele.

11

I would feel scared whenever Makhweyana approached me. I couldn't even sleep at night. I would stay awake all night thinking about him. Every time I woke up I would worry about when he would arrive. Whenever I saw him, I would throw the water out of my bucket and go to the river again to get a chance to see him. Whenever this man arrived he would smile with his sparkling teeth. He had dark eyes and a soft voice. I felt as if I was holding cotton wool when he held my hand because he had such soft hands.

Ngangiye ngizwe nginokwesaba uma uMakhweyana eza kimi. Ngangingakwazi ngisho nokulala ebusuku. Ngangijama ubusuku bonke ngicabanga ngaye. Ngangikhathazeka ngokuthi uyofika nini. Uma ngimbona ngangichitha amanzi asele ebhakedeni lami ngiye emfuleni ukuze ngithole ithuba lokuthi sibonane. Uma ifika lensizwa yayivele ihleke ngamazinyo ayo awuthotho. Yayinamehlo amnyama nezwi eliphansi. Ngangizwa sengathi ngibambe uvolo uma ingibambe ngesandla ngoba yayinezandla ezithambe ngalendlela.

12

13

On the day I planned to accept Makhweyana's love, all the maidens were out when I arrived at home. I looked for them everywhere because they had to give Makhweyana the bead necklace. I was about to go crazy with love. I never knew that loving someone would feel so wonderful. It was my first time for falling in love. My love burned inside me.

Eventually, the maidens returned. I told them and they gave Makhweyana the necklace.

Ngelanga engangihlose ukuluvuma ngalo uthando lukaMakhweyana ngafika izintombi zingekho ekhaya. Ngazifuna yonke indawo ngoba kwakufanele zinike uMakhweyana ucu. Kwase kuthi angisangane uthando. Ngangingazi ukuthi ukuthanda umuntu kumnandi kangaka. Futhi ngangiqala ukuthanda umuntu. Uthando lwaluvutha ngaphakathi kimina.

Ngesikade zabuya izintombi. Ngazitshela zase zimnika ucu uMakhweyana.

They then gave me advice about good conduct when one is in love. I listened but I did not follow a single one of those instructions.

Makhweyana then praised himself, calling himself, "Container that cannot hold water; big mountain bird which, when it raises its wings, makes thunder and hailstorms such that women rush out with beans and mealies, scatter them and say, 'Go back to the sea.' "

Zase zingiyala ngokuziphatha uma umuntu eseqomile. Ngalalela kodwa akukho nokukodwa engakwenza kulokho ezazingiyala ngakho.

UMakhweyana wase ezibongela ezibiza ngo, "Sigubhu dedel'amanzi; uNsingizi enkulu yentaba, ethi uma iphakamisa amaphiko lidume lehlise isichotho, kuphume abafazi nezinkobe bakusakaze bathi, 'Phindela emuva olwandle.' "

15

Father's dish

Dorothea Mkhize : Clermont Sub 5A Literacy Class

I remember a dish that belonged to my husband. He was the only one who ate from it. Even my children knew this. We even called it, "Father's dish".

Indishi kababa

Ngikhumbula indishi ekwakungeyomyeni wami. Kwakunguyena kuphela owayedlela kuyona. Ngisho nezingane zazikwazi lokhu. Saze sayiqamba igama sathi, "Indishi kababa".

16

17

After some time my husband fell ill and eventually passed away. I used to cry all the time when I dished up sour milk, noticing this dish. I felt great sadness and missed him with his dish.

At some point a war broke out in our area at Mbumbulu. There was fighting and people ran away deserting their homes. We also deserted ours not knowing where we were going. All of us women took shelter at the local school. That is how we lost our property. Father's dish was also left there as we ran away.

Kuthe ngokuhamba kwesikhathi wagula umyeni wami waze washona. Ngangikhala njalo uma ngiphaka amasi ngiyibona lendishi. Ngangivele ngifikelwe usizi ngimkhumbule nendishi yakhe.

Kuhambe kwahamba kwasuka impi enkulu endaweni yakithi eMbumbulu. Kwakuliwa abantu bebaleka beshiya amakhaya abo. Nathi sasuka sashiya singazi nokuthi siyaphi. Sonke thina besimame sakhosela esikoleni sendawo. Yingaleyondlelake esalahlekelwa ngayo yimpahla yethu. Indishi kababa nayo yasala khona lapho ngenkathi sibaleka.

18

Working on a farm

Paulina Makhaye : Clermont Central Literacy Class

When I was growing up I worked on a white man's farm at Sterkfontein in Bethal. I used to just work and instead of a wage would be given a bag of mealies when it was harvest time. I also looked after the white children.

Ukusebenza epulazini

Kwathi ngisakhula ngasebenza epulazini lomlungu eSterkfontein eBethal. Ngangisebenza nje ngingaholi mali kodwa nginikezwa isaka lombila uma sekuvunwa. Ngangibuye ngigade nezingane zabelungu.

We used to go for visits on a cart drawn by two horses. I used to sit at the back or sometimes at the white man's feet. One day the horse kicked me where I was seated. Luckily I did not get hurt. Instead a plank broke and fell down and the cart was stopped. The owners alighted and repaired it. I then rode at the back because I was scared.

Whenever we arrived at the place that we were visiting, I was instructed to watch the cart and the horses and to take the horses to drink water. I would be given black tea in a jam tin and bread to eat.

Sasiye sivakashe ngekalishi elalidonswa amahashi amabili. Ngangihlala ngemuva ngesinye isikhathi ngihlale ezinyaweni zendoda yomlungu. Ngelinye ilanga langikhahlela ihashi lapho engangihlezi khona. Ngenhlanhla ngasinda. Esikhundleni sokuba ngilimale kwephuka ipulangwe lase limiswa ikalishi. Abanikazi balo behla balikhanda. Ngagibela ngemuva ngoba ngase ngesaba.

Kwakuthi uma sifika lapho esasivakashele khona kuthiwe angisale ngigade ikalishi namahashi, ngibuye ngiwahole ngiyowaphuzisa. Ngangiyaye nginikwe itiye elimnyama elifakwe ethinini likajamu nesinkwa ukuthi ngidle.

20

21

When we got back home I would eat phuthu and strained sour milk and then go to collect cowdung for making fire. We only had meat when a cow died.

The whites did not want me to stand with their children in front of the camera whenever they took pictures while we played together. They told me to stand aside because I was black. This used to hurt me badly. Even today the sight of a camera reminds me of what used to happen in the past.

Uma sesifika ekhaya ngangiye ngidle uphuthu nomlaza bese ngihamba ngiyotheza amalongwe okubasa. Inyama sasiyidla kuphela uma kufe inkomo.

Abelungu babengafuni ngime nezingane zabo phambi kwekhamera uma bethatha izithombe ngenkathi sidlala. Babengitshela ukuthi angime eceleni ngoba ngimnyama. Lokhu kwakungiphatha kabi kakhulu. Nanamhlanje ukubona ikhamera kungikhumbuza okwakwenzeka kudala.

Sometimes I would be whipped as punishment whenever a child cried. I used to run away to my grandmother. My grandmother would send me back to my employer for fear of losing a place to stay on the farm.

I will never forget those days.

Ngesinye isikhathi ngangijeziswa ngokushaywa ngesiswebhu uma kukhala ingane. Ngangiye ngibaleke ngiye kugogo. Ugogo wayevele angixoshe angiphindisele emuva kumqashi wami ngoba esaba ukulahlekelwa yindawo yokuhlala epulazini.

Angisoze ngazikhohlwa lezozinsuku.

Love that never ends

Gasta Ntuli : Lamontville Centre Literacy Class

When I was young I fell in love with a young man whose name was Aaron Ngwane. I was so much in love with this young man. We then lost contact. After that I fell in love with another young man who was Joshua Mkhize. This was merely to while away the time. My heart was more with the first man Aaron.

Uthando olungapheliyo

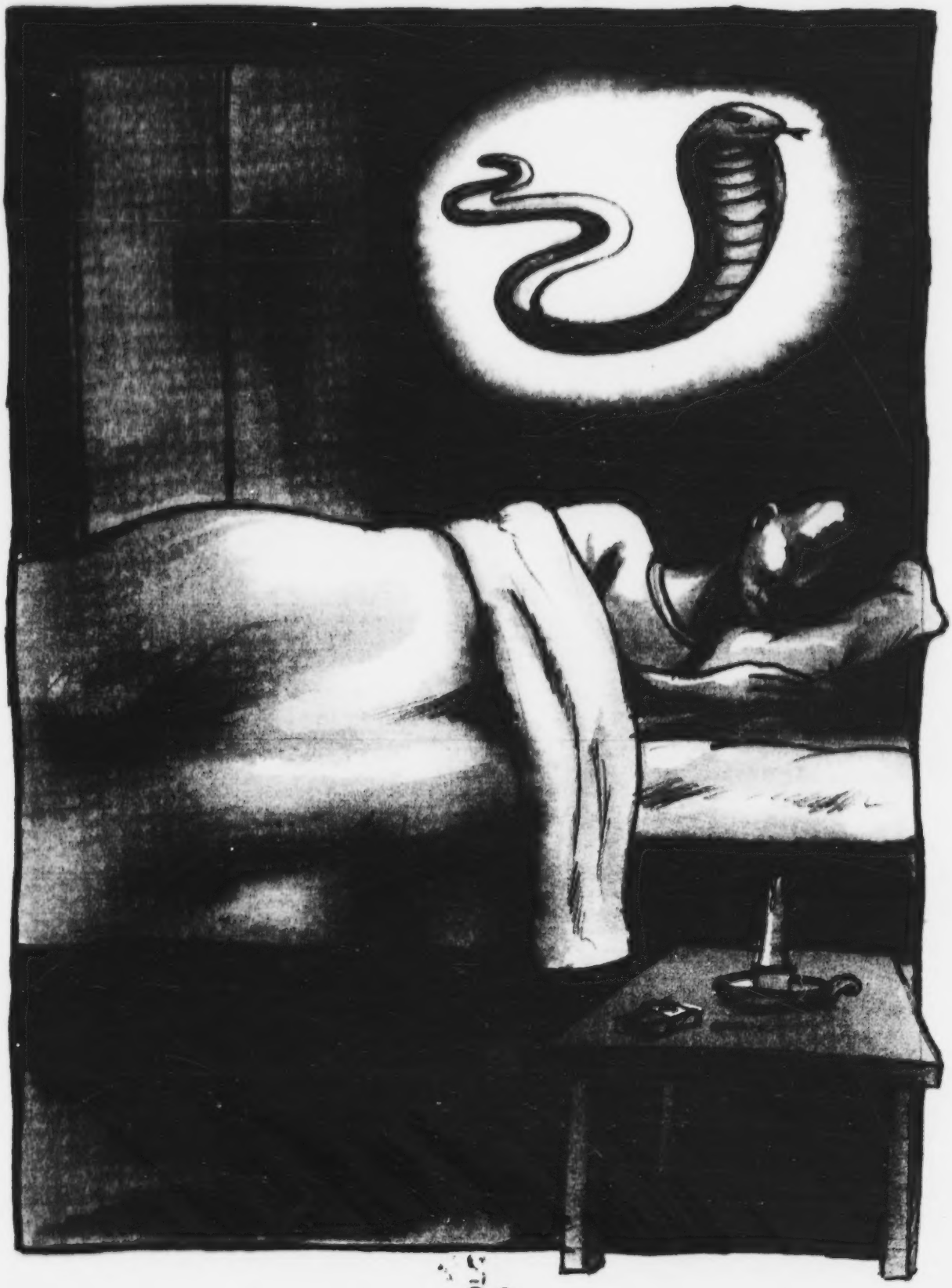
Ebusheni bami ngathandana nensizwa igama layo ekwakungu Aaron Ngwane. Ngangiyithanda lensizwa ngingezwa lutho ngayo. Kuthe kusuka sadukelana nayo. Ngase ngiqoma enye insizwa okwakungu Joshua wakwaMkhize. Lokhu kwabe kungukugcina icala nje. Inhliziyo yami yayigxile kulensizwa yokuqala uAaron.

After losing contact for a year, I met Aaron again. He was eager for us to renew our love. He persisted with his request and I also felt that I still loved him but I needed courage to leave the one that I was with then. While still deciding whether to return to him, I heard that he had passed away after being involved in a car accident.

I missed Aaron so much I did not get any rest. I dreamt about him complaining and wanting us to renew our love.

Emuva konyaka sadukelana, ngabuye ngahlangana noAaron futhi. Wayesha amashushu efuna sivuselele uthando lwethu. Wabelesela nesicelo sakhe futhi nami ngezwa ukuthi ngisamthanda kodwa ngidinga isibindi sokulahla lona engase ngimqomile. Ngithe ngisacabanga ukubuyela kuyena ngezwa ukuthi useshonile emuva kokulimala engozini yemoto.

Ngamkhumbula kakhulu uAaron ngangakuthola ukuphumula. Ngangimphupha ebalisa futhi efuna sibuyelane.



26

One night while I was asleep, he appeared in the form of a snake and said, "Even now you don't want to return my love?" I agreed and said that we could be lovers again. He thanked me. After I had agreed I never saw Aaron again. He thanked me and disappeared for ever.

From that day onwards I felt relieved knowing that I had set Aaron free. I continued with my life with Joshua. We lived happily, got married and were separated only by death.

Kwathi ngelinye ilanga ngilele ebusuku wafika eyisimo senyoka wathi, "Nanamanje awukakafuni ukungibuyela?" Ngase ngivuma ngathi singaba yizithandani. Wangibonga. Emuva kokuba sengivumile angiphindange ngambona uAaron. Wabonga wanyamalala unomphelo.

Kusukela ngalelolanga ngakhululeka sengazi ukuthi sengimkhululile uAaron. Ngase ngiqhubeka nempilo yami noJoshua. Sahlala kahle, sashada saze sahlukaniswa kuphela ukufa.

She was overcome with love

Rose Thulazi Zungu : Lamontville Centre Literacy Class

Under the mountain Phasiwe in Mgungundlovu there was a girl named Thobile and her surname was Ndaba. She was in standard 6 in the year 1955. That was a very good standard then. This young lady helped with the Sunday school and she was also good at leading hymns in church.

Wagajwa uthando

Phansi kwentaba iPhasiwe eMgugundlovu kwakukhona intombazane igama layo okwakunguThobile kungeyakwaNdaba. Yayifunda ibanga lesithupha ngonyaka ka1955. Kwakuyibanga elihle kakhulu leli ngalesosikhathi. Lentombi yayisiza ebandleni kusontoskole futhi iligagu ekuqaleni amaculo esontweni.

28

Whenever there was a wedding, she was the centre of attraction. Whenever there was a gathering, not all young women were present if Thobile had not yet arrived. She had a good character. Whenever it was virginity testing day, she would lead the young girls with her white flag.

Amongst her suitors, was one young man of the Zuma clan called Bongani. Bongani was tall and dark with snow-white teeth. He was beginning to grow a beard but would shave it neatly into nice corners. Whenever he came to pursue Thobile, he would come riding his stylish bicycle.

Uma kunomshado yayivelela. Uma kunemibuthano kwakube azikapheleli izintombi engakafiki uThobile. Wayenesimilo esihle. Uma kuwusuku lokuhlolwa kwezintombi wayezihola phambili neduku lakhe elimhlophe.

Ezeshelini zakhe kwakukhona insizwa yakwaZuma okwakuthiwa uBongani. UBongani wayemude emnyama enamazinyo amhlophe njengeqhwa. Wayeseqala ukuba nentshebe kodwa wayeyishefa ngobunono ibe amakhona amahle. Uma ezoncenga kuThobile, wayeye afike egibele ibhayisikili lakhe eliyisitayela.

30

This bicycle was colourfully decorated, with handles that were facing downwards. They had different colours such as red, green, yellow and white. The mirrors on its horns were four cornered. The spokes on the wheels were so shiny, as if they had never ridden in dust. The young man would push the bicycle slowly whenever he accompanied Thobile. One could hear the sounds of the spokes of the wheels. He would occasionally stop and lean on it. Thobile would also stop and cast her eyes downwards so that the young man would not see that she was already in love with him.

Lelibhayisikili lalihlotshiswe kahle, linezibambo ezigobele phansi. Zazinemibala ehlukahlukene njengobomvu, oluhlaza, ophuzi nomhlophe. Izibuko ezimpondweni zalo zaziyizikwele. Izipokwe emasondweni zazicwebezela sengathi alihambi othulini. Insizwa yayiliphusha kancane uma iphelezela uThobile. Wawuzwa umsindo wezipokwe zamasondo. Yayilokhu ima incika kulona. UThobile naye wayema akhophoze ukuze insizwa ingaboni ukuthi vele wayeseyithanda.

31

Whenever Bongani appeared, Thobile would go crazy. She held back though because girls of her age group had to be given permission first to fall in love. She also had to maintain her character, grow up and not be fooled by the fact that she became popular at an early age. When it was time to go, Bongani would blow the hooter with big and small sounds, "Po-bo po-bo". That sound would ring in Thobile's ears when she was asleep at night. This courtship lasted for two years.

Uma eqhamuka uBongani wayesangana uThobile. Wayeye azibambe kodwa ngoba izintombi ezisebangeni leminyaka yakhe zazilinda ukunikwa imvume yokuthi sezingaqoma. Futhi kwakusafanele abambe isimilo, akhule angaphiki nokuthi washesha ukuthatha amehlo abantu ngoba eligagu. Kwakuthi uma sekuyisikhathi sokuhamba uBongani ashaye ihutha ngemisindo emincane nemikhulu ethi, "Po-bo po-bo." Lowomsindo wawunkeneneza emadlebeni kaThobile uma eselele ebusuku. Ukuqomisana kwabo kwathatha iminyaka emibili.

When Thobile was 19 years old, the day arrived for her and young girls of her age to be given permission to get lovers. Bongani came, blowing the horn of his bicycle. Thobile emptied the water container and quickly went out. Bongani said once, "How long do I have to plead, Thobile, Ndaba's child?" Thobile kneeled down and said, "Go to my sister Nolwandle." Bongani praised himself saying, "I have conquered; I, the son of Msholozi, Nxamalala," performing with his bicycle riding it in front of Thobile. It seemed as if Thobile was dreaming.

Kwathi eseneminyaka engu 19 uThobile, lwafika usuku lokujutshwa kwakhe nontanga yakhe. Waqhamuka uBongani eshaya uphondo lwebhayisikili lakhe. Wachitha amanzi esitsheni uThobile waphuma ngokushesha. Washo kwaba kanye uBongani wathi, "Kuyoze kube nini ngikhala Thobile mntakaNdaba?" Waguqa phansi uThobile wathi, "Hamba uye kudadewethu uNolwandle." Wayesezibongela uBongani ethi, "Ngadla mina kaMsholozi kaNxamalala," egiya ngebhayisikili lakhe eligibela phambi kukaThobile. Kwakungathi uyaphupha uThobile.

Bongani hoisted a white flag at his house. It was the morning of the New year when the flag signifying Thobile's falling in love was raised.

That year was very important in Thobile's life because at church as well, she was waiting for the Easter month. This was when she and the other young women that she was leading were going to be graduated and accepted as saved. Months passed and all was well with Thobile. She also then showed traditional respect to the Zuma family.

One week before Easter, the names of all those who were going to be accepted as saved ones were announced.

UBongani wamisa iduku elimhlophe kwabo. Kwakungu Ncibijane ekuseni liphakama iduku lokuqoma kukaThobile.

Lowonyaka wawubalulekile empilweni kaThobile ngoba nasebandleni wayelindele inyanga yePhasika. Lesi isikhathi lapho yena nezintombi ayezihola babezokwembeswa bamukelwe njengabasindisiwe. Kwaqhubeka izinyanga kukuhle konke kuThobile. Wayesehlonipha kwaZuma.

Kuthe ngesonto elilandelwa yiPhasika amenyezelwa amagama abobonke ababekhethwe ukuthi bakulungele ukwemukelwa njengabasindisiwe ebandleni.

34

Thobile's name, the leader of young women, did not appear.

Thobile was puzzled by this. It did not occur to her that the young man she had fallen in love with had never set his foot in church. What Thobile had done was a disgrace to the church. She was supposed to follow the church rules and wait to be chosen in church rather than follow her heart.

This made Thobile dislike living in her village because she was ashamed. She then decided to go and look for work in Durban.

Alivelanga elikaThobile igama, umholi wezintombi.

Wadideka nje uThobile yilokho. Akuzange kufike nje nakancane kuyena ukuthi phela insizwa lena ayeseyiqomile yayingawazi umnyango wesonto. Ayekwenzile uThobile kwakulihlazo ebandleni. Wayemele ukuba alandele imithetho yebandla alinde aze athole omkhethayo ebandleni kunokuba alandele inhliziyo yakhe.

Lokhu kwamenza uThobile akangabe esathanda ukuhlala endaweni yakubo esenamahloni. Wabe esenquma ukuhamba ayofuna umsebenzi eThekwini.

35

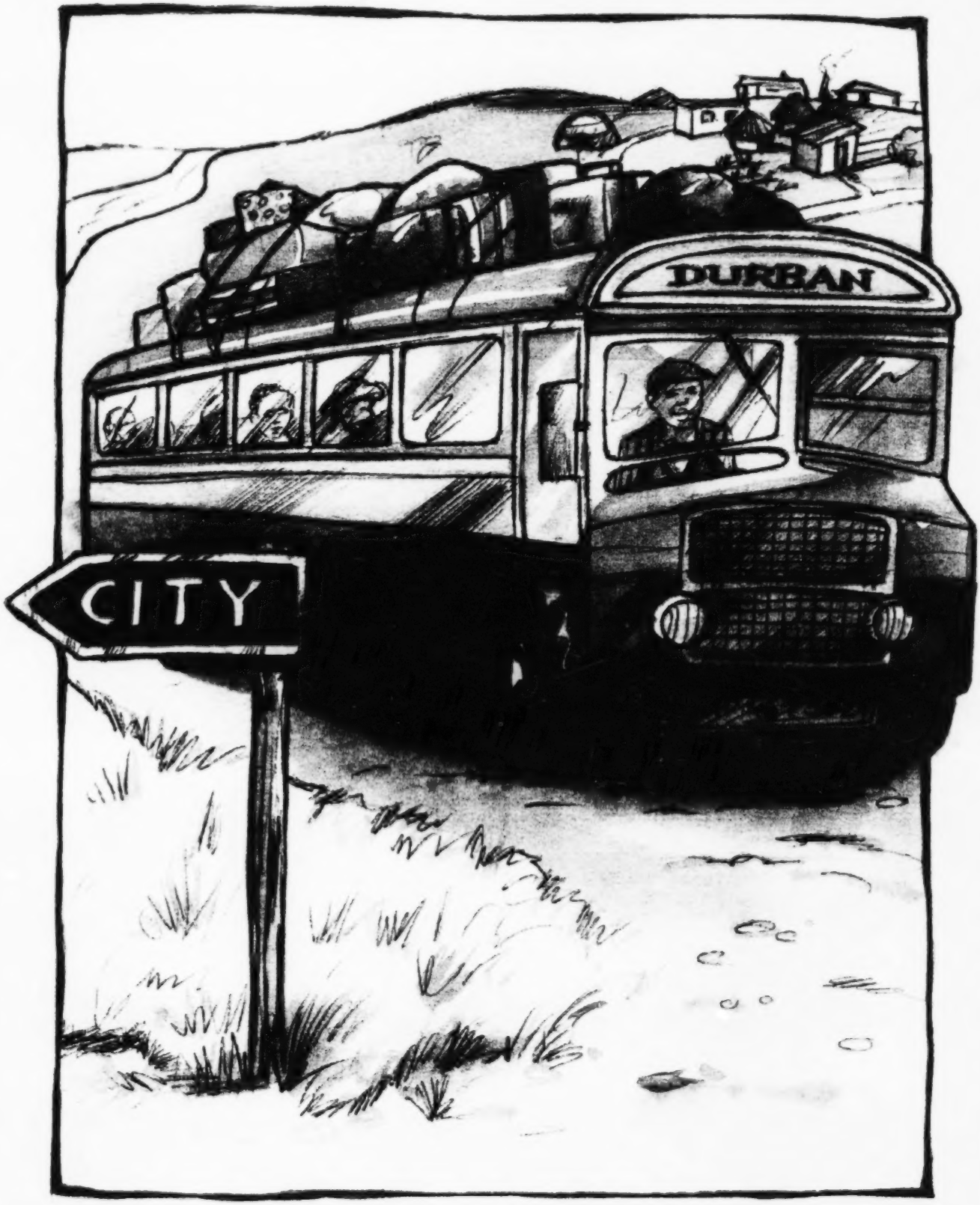
She and her friend Thoko left their village on 27 September 1961. In Durban, they encountered difficulties because of special permits that were required. They changed their passes because they were still young. They took the surname of Ndlovu after the Ndlovu family they first stayed with. They asked Ndlovu to register them in his name and he did this.

One woman soon secured a job for Thobile as a domestic worker. The white employer was happy with Thobile because she did not know much about Durban and she stayed at home and did not loiter around.

Yena nomngane wakhe uThoko basuka endaweni yakubo ngomhlaka 27 Septemba 1961. Bahlangabezana nezingqinamba eziningi eThekwini ngenxa yezipesheli ezazifuneka. Bashintsha amapasi abo ngoba babesebancane. Bathatha isibongo sakwaNdlovu emva komndeni wakwaNdlovu abaqale bahlala nawo. Bacela uNdlovu ukuthi ababhalise esibongweni sakhe, nempela wakwenza lokho.

Omunye owesifazane washeshe watholela uThobile umsebenzi wasezindlini. Umlungu owayengumqashi wakhe wayejabulile ngaye ngoba wayengakwazi okuningi ngeTheku futhi ehlala ekhaya engazuli.

36


DURBAN
CITY

This made Thobile's heart happy and she soon reverted back to her old self.

Thobile joined the gospel church and soon repeated what she had done in her village.

After ten months a particular young man from Vryheid joined the church. This man sang well. His name was Joseph Zungu, popularly known as Manzini. He was not interested in women. He had small eyes. He was tall and of the same height as Bongani but brighter in complexion with short, beautiful, even teeth.

Lokhu kwenza inhliziyo kaThobile ijabule wabuyela esimweni sakhe sakuqala.

UThobile wajoyina iqembu lomculo wokholo waphinda ayekwenze endaweni yakubo.

Emuva kwezinyanga eziyishumi insizwa ethile eyayisuka eFilidi yajoyina ebandleni. Lensizwa yayicula kahle. Igama layo kwakunguJoseph Zungu idume ngelika Manzini. Yayingabakhonzile abesifazane. Yayinamehlo amancane. Yayiyinde inobude obulinganayo nobukaBongani kodwa ikhanya ngebala inamazinyo amahle, amafishane.

38

While other young women were expecting him to pursue them, he chose Thobile.

Thobile wanted to show how honourable she was. She took one year and three months before responding. During the Easter trip when all those who were coming from Durban shared the same house, Thobile could not hold herself any longer. Young man Manzini also recognised this. On their return he approached the church elders and said, "I would like to request Thobile's response so that we can start a family."

Kuthe ezinye izintombi zisalindele ukuthi izeshele yakhetha uThobile.

UThobile wafuna ukuveza ubuqotho bakhe. Wathatha unyaka nezinyanga ezintathu ngaphambi kokuphendula. Kwathi kunohambo lwePhasika lapho bonke ababevela eThekwini behlala endlini eyodwa uThobile wehluleka ukuzibamba. Nensizwa enguManzini yakubona lokhu. Ekubuyeni kwabo yaya kubaphathi besonto yathi, "Ngicela impendulo kaThobile ukuze siqale umuzi."

39

Other young men from Johannesburg and Pretoria were also interested in her. Thobile prayed because of all this, fasting for three days asking for the Lord to show her the right husband.

On the third day she had a vision that she and other church members were dipped in water. When she came out, she was rescued by Manzini who placed her under a tree and fanned her. This indicated to Thobile that the Lord had shown her that Manzini would be her husband. She then went to the church elders and agreed to marry Joseph.

Nezinye izinsizwa ezazisuka eGoli nasePitoli zazimfuna. UThobile wathandaza ngenxa yako konke lokhu, wazila izinsuku ezintathu ecela iNkosi ukuthi imkhombise umyeni ofanele.

Ngosuku lwesithathu waba nombono, yena namanye amalunga esonto bengeniswa emanzini. Kwathi ngenkathi ephuma wahlengwa nguManzini owambeka ngaphansi kwesihlahla wamphephetha. Lokhu kwamkhombisa uThobile ukuthi iNkosi yayimbonisa ukuthi nguManzini ozoba ngumyeni wakhe. Wabe eseya kubaphathi bebandla wavuma ukushada noJoseph.

40

Manzini was very happy. The congregation was also happy with the proposed wedding of two well-behaved young people. As a first step, the Ndaba family was approached and there was exchange of gifts, a big engagement and then the wedding.

Thobile with her constantly shifting luck, was married for five years but unable to have children. She had a baby boy in the sixth year. She called him Thamsanqa.

Wajabula kakhulu uManzini. Nebandla nalo lajabula ngokuhlela ukushada kwabantu abasha abaziphethe kahle. Kwaqalwa ngokuyocela isihlobo esihle kwaNdaba, kwembeswa kwabuya kwaba nomkhulu umethembiso lo kwase kulandela umshado.

UThobile nenhlanhla yakhe ehamba iphonseka wahlala engabatholi abantwana iminyaka emihlanu. Waze wamthola umntwana womfana ngonyaka wesithupha. Wamqamba igama wathi uThamsanqa.

42

42

Because she did not trust that she would have any more children, she had another one soon. She then said, "You name the child Manzini." Manzini named the child Mzikayise. Thobile stopped there and never had any more children. Her household was peaceful. Her husband eventually became a priest. Her dream of sticking to faith was fulfilled.

Ngoba wayengasethembi waphinda omunye eduze. Wayesethi, "Yiqambe wena Manzini ingane." UManzini wamqamba wathi uMzikayise umntwana. Wema lapho-ke uThobile akaphindange wabathola abanye abantwana. Umuzi wakhe wawunokuthula. Umyeni wakhe wagcina esengumfundisi. Iphupho lakhe lokuhlala okholweni lafezeka.

My grief

Victoria Tembe : Clermont Sub 5A Literacy Class

I am from the Majola family. My husband is Ngwenya. He went to work in Johannesburg. He left me with seven children. He used to send me money every month-end. As time went on, things started to change and he stopped sending me money. The children and I started getting hungry. Then I heard through the grapevine that he was living with another woman.

Usizi lwami

Mina nginguMaMajola. Umyeni wami uNgwenya. Wahamba waya kosebenza eGoli. Wangishiya nezingane eziyisikhombisa. Wayengithumelela imali njalo ekupheleni kwenyanga. Kuhambe kwahamba zajika izinto wema ukungithumelela imali. Saqala salamba nabantwana. Ngase ngiyezwa ngosizwile ukuthi usehlala nonkosikazi thizeni.

45

He was later retrenched from his job. After his retrenchment, he returned home, broke. On his return he chased me and the kids away.

I packed our clothes in a suitcase and returned home. When we arrived at Mkhuze station, the train had already departed so we slept at the station. When we woke up in the morning, we took the first train. As the train departed, I felt so overcome with grief and cried. I was going back to where I was born, to my parents.

Wabuye wadilizwa emsebenzini. Kuthe lapho esediliziwe wabuya weza ekhaya engenamali. Ekufikeni kwakhe wasixosha nabantwana.

Ngapakisha izimpahla zethu epotimendeni sabuyela ekhaya. Sathi uma sifika esiteshini eMkhuze safika isitimela sesihambile, salala khona lapho. Savuka ekuseni sagibela isitimela sokuqala. Kuthe uma isitimela sesisuka ngafikelwa usizi ngakhala. Zehla izinyembezi sengiya kubazali bami ekhaya lapho ngazalelwa khona.

46

My hat

Mirriam Zondi : Clermont Central Literacy Class

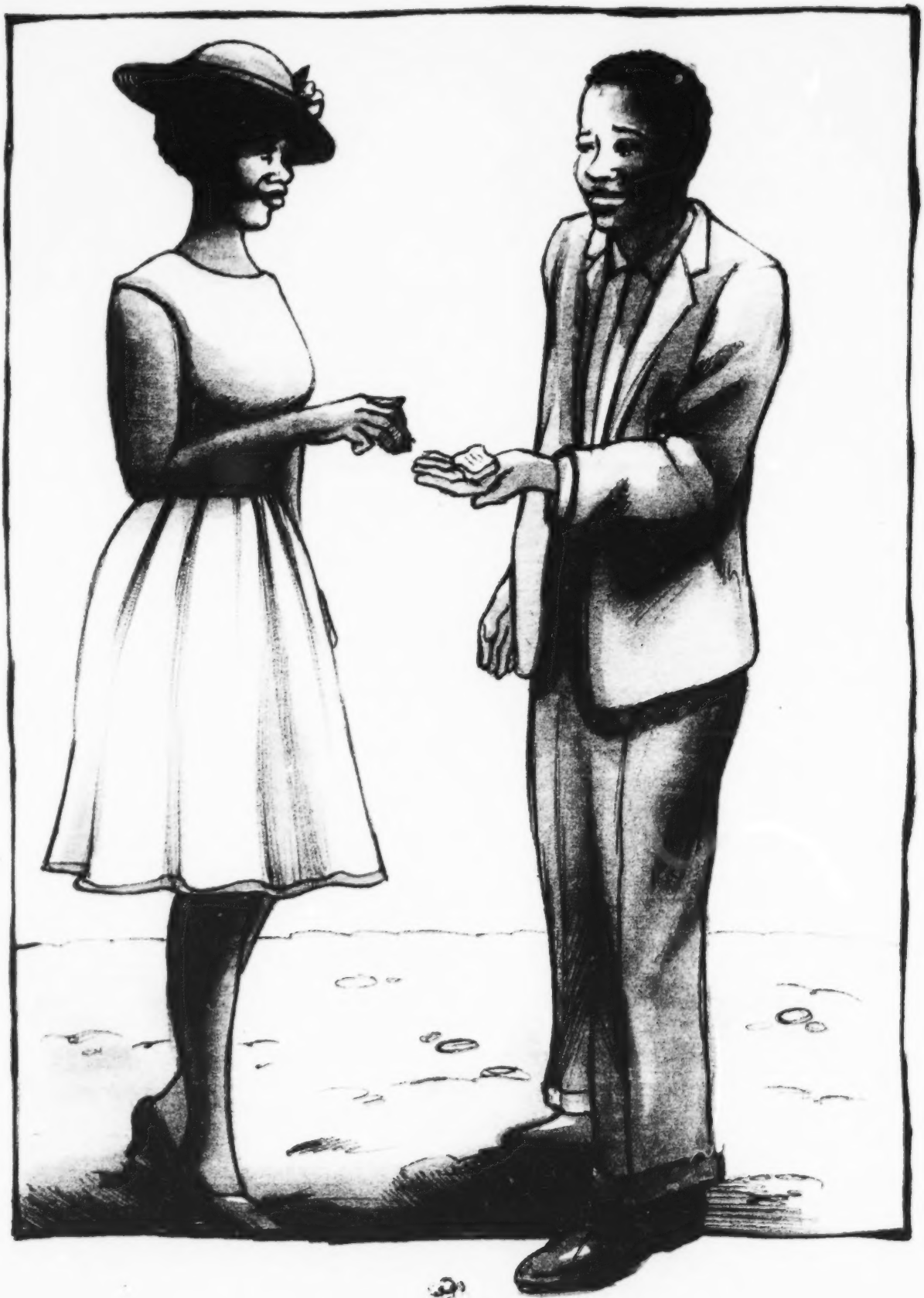
I miss the fun of the olden days. Life goes forwards and never backwards. I remember when I was young and growing up, I was beautifully built. I was neither tall nor short, just medium height. Whenever I went out, all the young men would go wild. Whatever I wore suited me perfectly.

Isigqoko sami

Ngikhumbula ubumnandi bezinsuku zakudala. Akubuyelwa muva kungemgqigqo. Ngikhumbula ngisemusha ngisakhula, ngangakhiwe kahle. Ngangingemude ngingemfishane ngilingene nje. Ngangiye ngithi uma ngiphuma izinsizwa zisangane. Ngangifanelwa yinoma yini engangiyigqoka.

I was so beautiful and back then things were so cheap. You could get a yard of fabric for as little as five cents. We used to go out to look for temporary jobs as young girls. It was easy to secure work then. We wanted to save ourselves some money to buy nice clothes. Those days around Christmas there would be ceremonies where we could meet our suitors. We tried to look our best to impress the young men. I would wear my beautiful green dress and high heeled shoes. I also had a special green hat that I would wear slightly slanted.

Ngangimuhle kanti futhi kudala ezinto zazishibhile. Wawusakwazi ukuthola iyadi ngentengo encane ngangozukwa. Sasike siphume siyizintombi siyofuna amatoho. Kwakulula ukuthola umsebenzi kuqala. Sasifuna ukuzibekela imali yokuthenga izingubo ezinhle. Ngalezozikhathi ngoKhisimusi kwakuba nemicimbi lapho sasihlangana khona nezesheli zethu. Sasigqoka siconse senzela ukuhlabekisa izinsizwa. Ngangiyaye ngigqoke ingubo yami enhle eluhlaza nezicathulo eziphakeme. Futhi nganginesigqoko esiphambili esiluhlaza engangisigqoka ngisihlephulele.



In the past there were sweets known as "Zulu motto". Whenever a young man wooed you, he would buy you one with a message that said, "Young woman, I love you. You are as beautiful as the sun." If you felt no love for that suitor, you would then buy one with a message that said, "No, I do not love you." If you did have feelings for him, you would then buy one saying, "Yes, young man, I love you."

That is what happened during our times.

Kuqala kwakukhona uswidi obhaliwe okwakuthiwa "uZulu motho". Uma insizwa ikweshela yayiye ikuthengele onomlayezo othi, "Ntombi ngiyakuthanda. Umuhle njenge langa." Uma uthando lwaleyo nsizwa ungenalo wawuye uthenge onomlayezo othi, "Cha angikuthandi." Uma usuyithanda wawuthenga othi, "Yebo nsizwa, ngiyakuthanda."

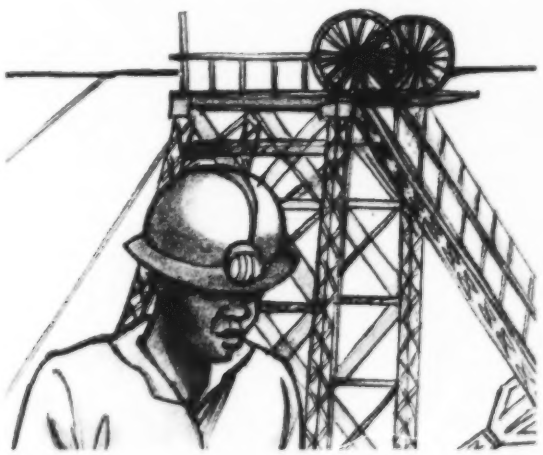
Yilokho ke okwakwenzeka ngezikhathi zethu.

50

Courage to conquer

Joseph Zungu : Lamontville Library Literacy Class

It was over ten years since Zikhulu started working on Gusheni's farm. It was a sheep farm in Vryheid. He had worked all these years but he was getting no pay. This made him want to leave his job to go and look for work in the city.



Isibindi umanqoba

Kwase kuyiminyaka engaphezu kweyishumi uZikhulu asebenza epulazini likaGusheni. Kwakuyipulazi lezimvu elaliseFilidi. Wayesesebenze yonke leminyaka kodwa engaholi lutho. Lokhu kwamenza ukuba afune ukuwushiya lomsebenzi ahambe ayowufuna edolobheni.

51

He had never been to Johannesburg but he had heard his father saying that he had an uncle working there. Zikhulu thought that Johannesburg was just a small place.

Not long after this idea crossed his mind, Zikhulu met the local police who asked for his pass. He did not have one. They threatened to arrest him but decided to forgive him. This worried Zikhulu. He asked Mr Gusheni to give him the money to pay for head tax. Luckily Gusheni gave him five pounds.

Wayengakaze aye eGoli kodwa wayeye ezwe uyise ethi kukhona umalume wakhe osebenza khona. UZikhulu wayecabanga ukuthi iGoli yindawo encane nje.

Kungekudala umfikele lomqondo, uZikhulu wahlangana namaphoyisa endawo ambuza ipasi. Wayengenalo. Asho ukumbopha, kodwa akhetha ukumxolela. Lokhu kwamphatha kabi uZikhulu. Wacela uMnumzane uGusheni ukuba amnike imali ukuze ayothelela ikhanda. Ngenhlanhla uGusheni wamnika opondo abayisihlanu.

52

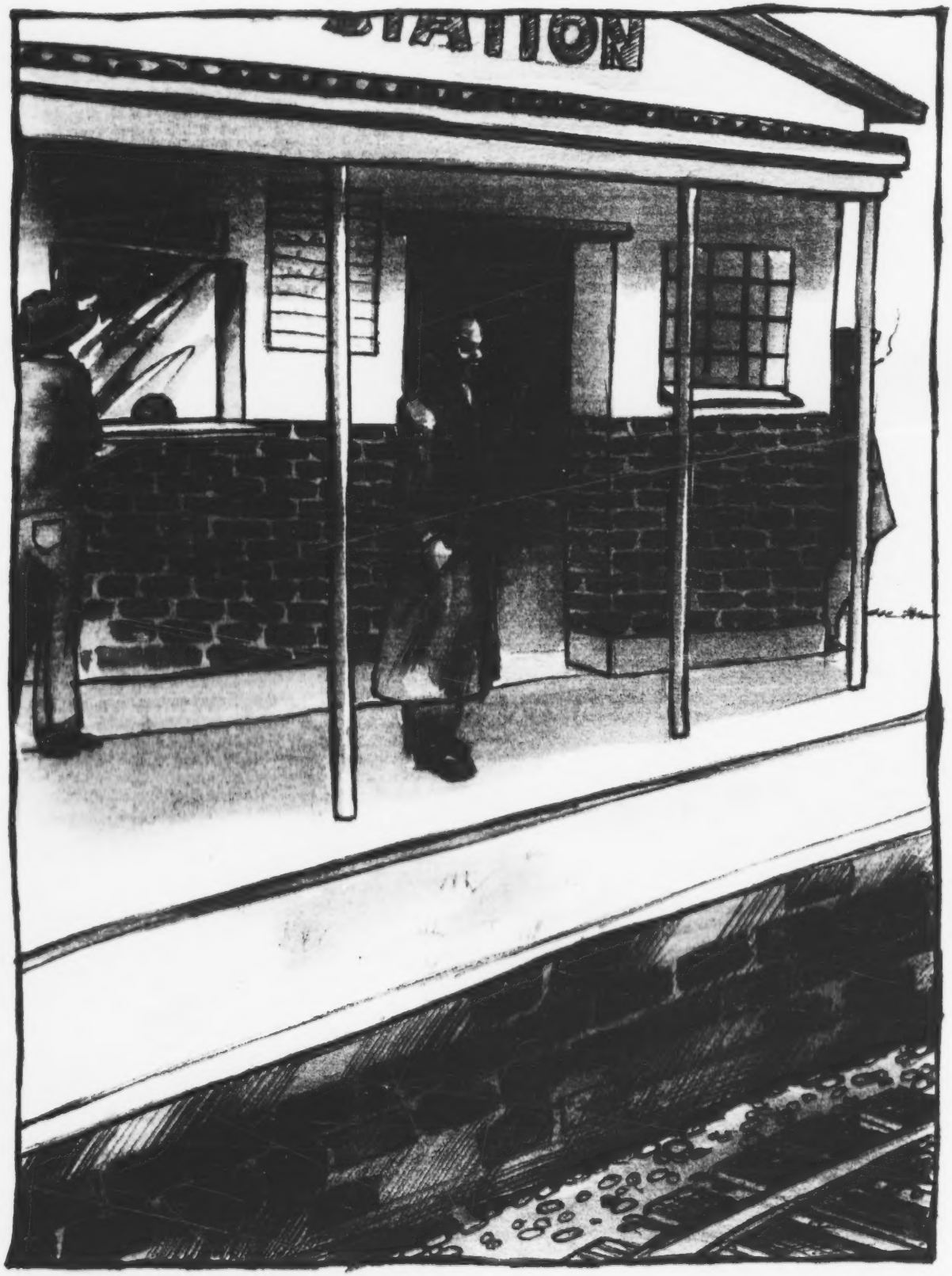
Zikhulu never said any farewells. He woke up very early, put on his soldier's coat, took his whip and left. Gusheni had bought him the coat to keep away the cold while herding the cattle. He used the whip when he was herding the sheep. He went straight to the train station and bought a ticket to Johannesburg.

He saw a man and a woman with a child also waiting for the train. He did not like to ask questions of anybody and decided that he would see what to do once the train arrived at Park Station.

Akavalelisanga uZikhulu. Wavuka ngesikabhadakazi, wagqoka ijazi lakhe lesisosha wathatha nesiswebhu sakhe wahamba. UGusheni wayemthengele lelijazi enzela ukuthi avimbe amakhaza uma elusile. Wayesebenzisa isiswebhu ukunqanda ngaso izimvu uma elusile. Waqonda esiteshini, wathenga ithikithi lesitimela esiya eGoli.

Wabona indoda eyayihamba nenkosikazi nengane esalinde isitimela. Akathandanga ukubuza lutho kumuntu wathi useyobona phambili lapho isitimela sesefika ePakisteshi.

53



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54

He was a bit scared because he had heard that in Johannesburg there are criminals who cut people up and make them disappear without a trace. Even if that was the case he had to be brave and risk it.

The train to Johannesburg arrived. Zikhulu felt scared because he was leaving familiar scenes and mountains behind. What also worried him was that he could not read and write. He sat together with the man that he had first seen at his local station. He hoped that he would see that he had reached the final destination when many people got off the train.

Lwalumshaya uvalo ngoba wayeke wezwa ukuthi eGoli kunezinswelaboya ezibulala abantu ngokubanquma bangaziwa lapho bashona khona. Yize noma wayenovalo, isibindi kwakungumanqoba.

Safika isitimela esiya eGoli. UZikhulu washaywa uvalo ngoba wayeseshiya izinkalo nezintaba azejwayele ngemuva. Enye into eyayimkhathaza ukuthi wayengakwazi ukufunda nokubhala. Wahlala ndawonye nalendoda ayeyibone esiteshini sangakubo. Wayethemba ukuthi uzobona uma esefike ekupheleni kwendlela yakhe uma abantu abaningi behla esitimeleni.

He became a bit bolder when he overheard other men who were wrapped in blankets saying that they were going to look for work in the mines. He then stuck close to these men. Even though he was very hungry, he did not have time to think about hunger. They slept at Park Station. They woke up in the morning and went to look for work in the mines. They were told that they would need permits to work and stay in Johannesburg.

When Zikhulu arrived at the place where he had to inquire about a permit, he was told to take off all his clothes.

Wema isibindi kancane uma ezwa amanye amadoda ayembethe iziqhuphu ethi ayofuna umsebenzi ezimayini. Wawancika lamadoda. Noma wayeselambile wayengenaso isikhathi sokucabanga ngendlala. Balala khona ePakisteshi. Bavuka ekuseni bayofuna umsebenzi ezimayini. Batshelwa ukuthi bazodinga izimvume zokuhlala eGoli, nokufuna umsebenzi khona.

Uma uZikhulu efika endaweni ayeyobuza khona ngemvume, watshelwa ukuthi akakhumule zonke izingubo zakhe.

56

The man who inspected them carried a short stick that he used to search him. He was told that since he came from rural areas, he was full of contagious diseases. They poked his buttocks after they had turned all parts of his body inside out. They escorted him to a shower and instructed him to bath telling him that he smelled and that they were killing the germs. After he had showered, they threw him a crumpled khakhi shirt and trousers which looked as if they came from a cow's mouth. They seated him outside and asked him to wait. At sunset some man arrived and showed him a place where he was going to sleep.

Indoda eyayibahlola yayiphethe indukwana emfishane eyayimphenya ngayo. Watshelwa ukuthi njengoba evela emaphandleni wayegcwele izifo ezithathelanayo. Bamjoja ezinqeni emva kokuba sebemphenyaphenye wonke umzimba. Bamqhuba bamfaka phansi kwesisefo bathi makageze uyanuka futhi babulala amagciwane. Emva kokuthi esegezile, bamphonsela ibhulukwana neyenjana likakhakhi okwakushwabene sengathi kuphuma emlonyeni wenkomo. Bamhlalisa ngaphandle bathi makalinde. Kuthe seliyoshona ilanga kwafika enye indoda yamkhombisa indawo lapho wayezolala khona.

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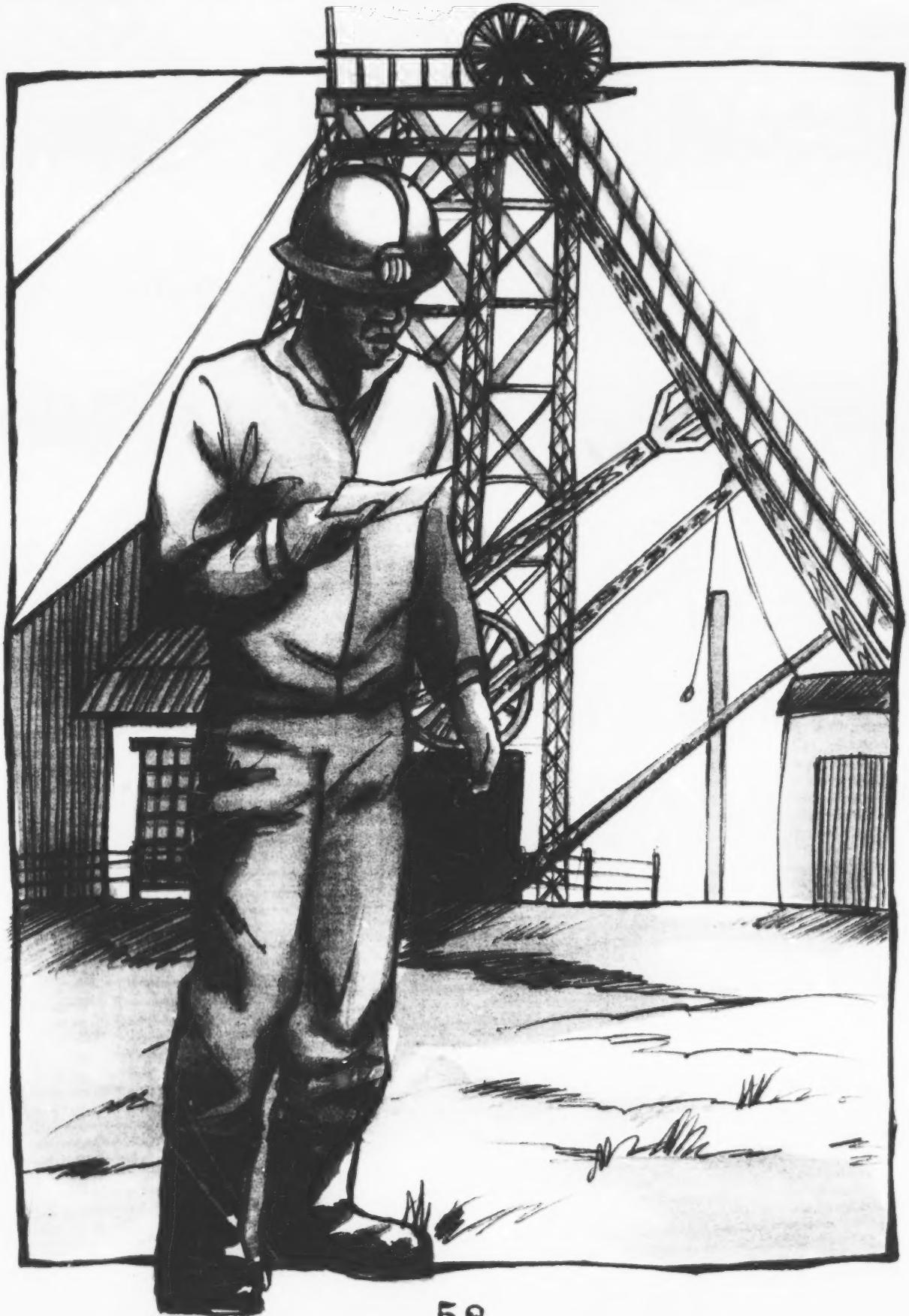


58

That is how Zikhulu got work in the mines. When he was visiting home later, he could read clearly all that was written on the way. This was because he learnt to read and write in the adult literacy class at the mines.

Yilendlelake uZikhulu athola ngayo umsebenzi ezimayini. Ngesikhathi esevakashela ekhaya ngokulandelayo wayeseyibona yonke into eyayibhaliwe endleleni. Lokhu ingoba wayesefunde ukufunda nokubhala esikoleni sabadala sasezimayini.

59

I looked for it and I found it

Mary Jane Mhlwazi : Ndunduma Literacy Class

Jobs are scarce nowadays. During our times there were plenty of jobs. No-one struggled to get a job. I, Thusi's daughter, used to work at Eston in Mid Illovo in 1958. The white woman I worked for was popularly known as Magwazuphutu.

Ngawufuna ngawuthola

Imisebenzi isiyindlala ezinsukwini zanamuhla. Ngesikhathi sethu imisebenzi yabe iyinala. Akekho umuntu owayehlupheka ukuthola umsebenzi. Mina ntombi kaThusi ngake ngasebenza eStoni eMidilova ngo 1958. Unkosikazi womlungu engabe ngimsebenzela wayedume ngokuthi UMagwazuphuthu.

60

I worked very well. I earned one shilling a month. I was content with this money because I managed to do whatever I wanted to do.

These white people had two sons. My job was to cook, wash and clean the house. I was happy with these white people. There was only one problem that I had with them. The madam did not want me to keep my eating utensils, an enamel plate and mug, inside the house. She instructed me to keep them outside saying that she would throw them out if I ever brought them into her house.

Ngangisebenza kahle kakhulu. Ngangihola ishumi losheleni ngenyanga. Yayingenelisa lemali ngoba ngangikwenza konke engabe ngifisa ukukwenza.

Lababelungu babenamadodana amabili. Umsebenzi wami kwabe kungukupheka, ngiwashe ngilungise nendlu. Ngangihlezi kahle kulababelungu. Yabe iyinye inkinga enganginayo. Wayengafuni umesisi ukuthi izitsha engangidla ngazo, ipuleti nemagi kukathayela ngizibeke endlini. Wayethi angizibeke phandle, ethi uzozilahla uma ngike ngazifaka endlini yakhe.

62

Her children used to ask me why I kept my eating utensils outside. I would just keep quiet not knowing how to answer them. I wonder if it was nowadays, now that whites have laundry rooms, she would have told me to keep them in the laundry room.

This white person liked me. She used to buy me a first class train ticket with her own money every time I visited home on holiday. The only problem was my eating utensils.

Abantwana bakhe babeye bangibuze ukuthi ngizibekelani phandle izitsha zami zokudla. Ngangivele ngithule ngingazi ukuthi ngizobaphendula ngithini. Angazi, ukube kwakuyisikhathi sanamuhla lapho abelungu sebenezindlu zokuwashela, wayeyothi angizibeke elondolo.

Lomlungu wabe engithanda. Wayeye angithengele ithikithi lesitimela lika-first class ngemali yakhe njalo uma ngivakashela ekhaya ngeholide. Inkinga nje kwakuyizitsha zami kuphela.

Making history

Elsie Ntombela : Ndunduma Literacy Class

I have travelled the world and I am grown up today. I never knew that a time would come for us to get a chance to vote. This happened after Mr Mandela's release from prison. Voting was for white people only and we knew very little about it.

Inqophamlando

Ngiwuhambile umhlaba ngikhulile namhlanje. Ngangingazi ukuthi kuyoze kufike isikhathi sokuthi nathi sivote. Lokhu kwenzeke emva kokuphuma kukaMnumzane uMandela ejele. Ukuvota kwakuyinto yabantu abamhlophe kuphela thina sizwa ngendaba.

64

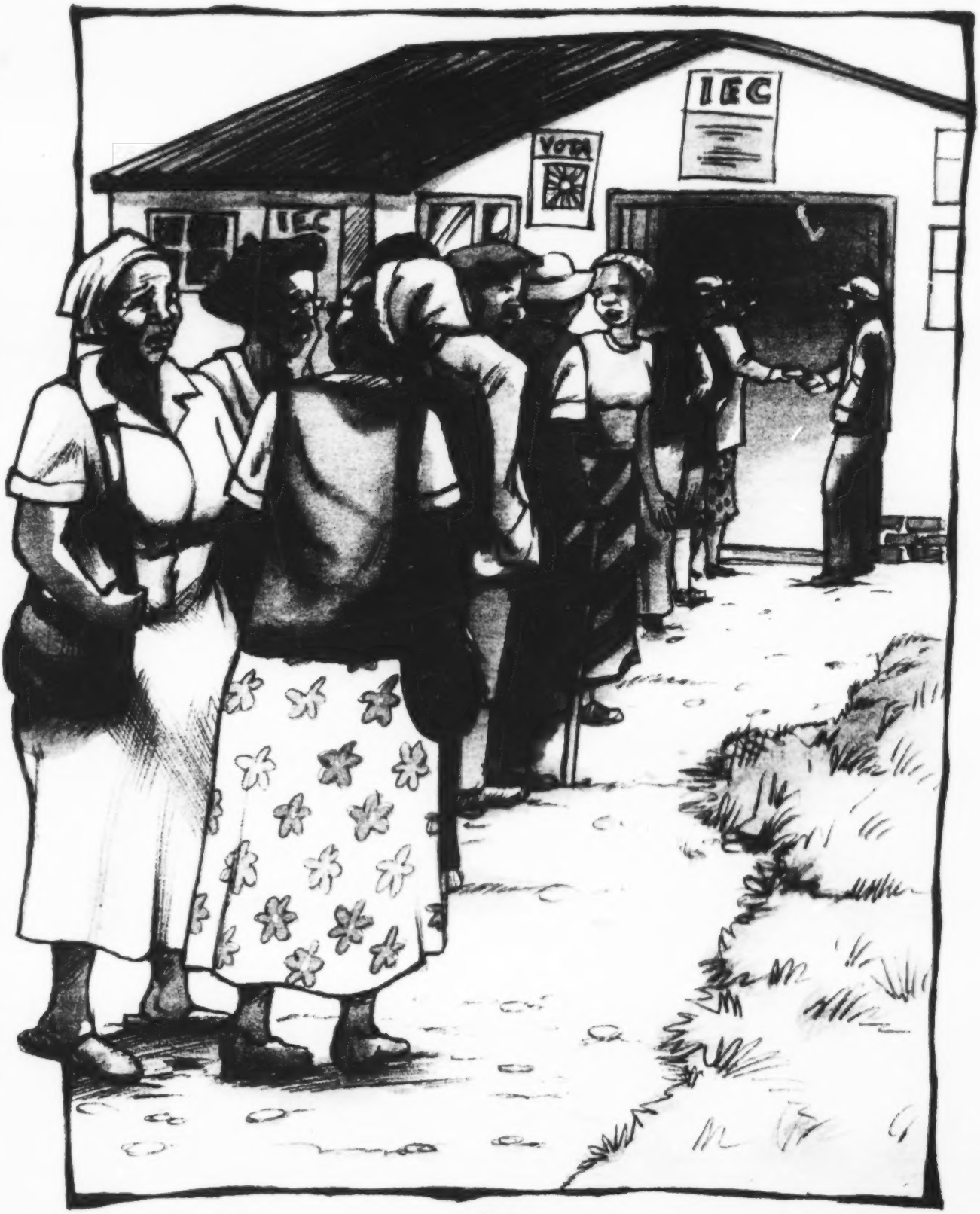
When we voted for the first time in 1994, I did not know where to start. Finally the big day came. Our local community leaders promised to transport us to the community hall.

I left my house and went to wait on the road. Other old women were already waiting. Two cars came. They were red Kombis and we got in. We thought that we were going to the community hall in Clermont where voting was happening but it was not so. Because of fear, none of us dared to ask where we were going.

Kuvotwa okokuqala ngo-1994 ngangingazi nokuthi ngizoqalaphi. Lwafika usuku olungaliyo. Abaholi endaweni yakithi basithembisa ukulandwa yizimoto zisiyise ehholo lomphakathi.

Ngaphuma ekhaya ngayolinda emgwaqeni. Ezinye izalukazi zase zilindile. Kwafika izimoto ezimbili. Kwakungamakhumbi amabili abomvu, sagibela. Phela sasicabanga ukuthi siya lapho kuvotelwa khona eholo lomphakathi eClermont, kanti akunjalo. Ngenxa yovalo akekho noyedwa kithina owabuza ukuthi siyaphi.

65



66

The cars finally stopped in a strange place very far away. After getting out, we were met by strange girls. The cars took off, leaving us with those girls. The girls asked us if we knew the person who we were going to vote for. We said, "It is our secret. You are not forced to discuss your choice with anybody." They warned us that we should not go into the same kombis when they returned, as these were obviously criminals.

Izimoto zaphetha zema endaweni esingayazi kude. Sesehlile ezimotweni sahlangatshezwa amantombazane esasingawazi. Zashaya zachitha izimoto zasishiya nalawomantombazane. Asibuza ukuthi siyamazi yini umuntu esizomvotela. Sathi, "Yimfihlo yethu. Awuphoqelekile ukutshela omunye umuntu ukuthi ukhetha bani." Abe esesexwayisa ukuthi uma ziphinde zibuya lezizimoto singabe sisazigibela ngoba kwakucaca ukuthi ngezezigilamkhuba.

67

They then took us into the voting place. We voted and came out when we had finished. We were so hungry since there were no shops around the voting place.

We were also afraid to ask any questions as we did not know this place. We took three different taxis on our way back home. We had to ask the taxi people for directions to Clermont because we were scared. We told the story when we arrived home and they were all so amazed to hear that we had been hijacked by crooked politicians.

Ase esingenisa lapho okuvotelwa khona. Savota saphuma sesiqedile. Sase sifile yindlala ngoba kwakungekho sitolo lapho kwakuvotelwa khona.

Sasesaba nokubuza ngoba kwakuyindawo esasingayazi. Sagibela amathekisi amathathu sesibuyela ekhaya. Kwafanele sibuze kwabamathekisi ukuthi basikhombise indlela eya eClermont ngoba sase sesaba. Sayixoxa indaba sesifika emakhaya bamangala kakhulu bonke ukuzwa ukuthi sase sithathwe abezepolitiki abayizigilamkhuba.

68

THE NEW READERS PROJECT

The New Readers Project of the Centre for Adult and Community Education, University of Natal, Durban, develops and supports adult literacy and basic English Second Language skills by producing books in simple language for the entertainment and education of adults.

How to contact us

If you want to find out more about the New Readers Project or about other books which we publish, please contact:

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70

These stories were written by a unique group of learners – older people from the Muthande Society for the Aged Literacy Programme. Their stories, arising from oral storytelling workshops, vividly bring back very personal memories of passionate love, loss, disappearing traditions and life in apartheid South Africa.

Lezizindaba zabhalwa uhlobo lwabafundi olwehlukile – abantu abadala benhlangano iMuthande Society for the Aged Literacy Programme. Lezizindaba eziqhamuka kwizifundo zabo zokuxoxwa kwendaba, zibuyisa izigameko ezindala zothando, ukulahleka, ukunyamalala kwamasiko nesikhathi sobandlululo eNingizimu Afrika.

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